

Data Sheet

USAID Mission:	Albania
Program Title:	Rule of Law
Pillar:	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Strategic Objective:	182-0220
Status:	Continuing
Proposed FY 2003 Obligation:	\$2,280,000 AEEB
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$1,200,000 AEEB
Proposed FY 2004 Obligation:	\$2,280,000 AEEB
Year of Initial Obligation:	FY 1992
Estimated Completion Date:	FY 2004

Summary: USAID's Rule of Law program promotes civil society participation and a strengthened judicial system through support to: the School of Magistrates; the National Judicial Conference; the Chancellery (Court Clerks); judicial organizations with the Ministry of Justice; the Albanian civil society coalition against corruption; and the Citizens Advocacy Office.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2003 Program:

Judicial institution building (\$1,030,000 AEEB). This involves several activities. For example, USAID will provide technical assistance to the School of Magistrates in its annual work plans, budgeting, and donor close-out strategy. A Secretariat for the Albanian National Judicial Conference (NJC) will be supported to ensure that the performance of the NJC continues to improve. Roundtable meetings of Albania's court chancellors will continue to improve court administration. Assistance to the Ministry of Justice will be provided to offer guidance in issues related to court management. USAID will continue the Judicial Reform Index in Albania to annually gauge the performance of the judiciary.

USAID also plans several training sessions in FY 2003. A select group of judges will be trained in legal reasoning and drafting judicial decisions, civil law and procedure, due legal process in a civil process, and contractual damage and torts to enable the judges to learn the latest on these subjects and use that knowledge in their courts. Judges and court staff will continue to receive basic training in computer use, including e-mail operations to enable further connectivity within the judicial system. Additionally, a number of budget officers will receive software training in budget preparation to ease the budgeting and reporting processes.

As part of this effort, citizen awareness activities will continue to create an information center in each court throughout Albania. Information regarding operation of the courts, court procedures, filing fees, legal rights, and procedures to report on corrupt or unethical practices will be available to citizens, NGOs and private business entities. Prior to and during Albania's National Day of Justice, brochures setting forth basic information about Albania's judicial system will be distributed to the public and the media. Contractors/grantees: American Bar Association/ Central and East European Legal Initiative (ABA/CEELI), (Financial Markets International, Inc.) FMI (prime), East-West Management Institute (EWMI) (sub). The FMI/EWMI award ends December 31, 2002 and the ABA/CEELI award ends April 30, 2003.

Anti-corruption (\$1,250,000 AEEB). The USAID sponsored Albanian Coalition Against Corruption (ACAC) will give several small grants to carry out a variety of activities aimed at combating corruption. The Judicial Observation Group, a sub-group within ACAC, will continue to monitor the efficiency and integrity of the judiciary. A Legislative Observation Group will continue to monitor Parliamentary proceedings, and a Budget Observation Group will monitor budgetary decisions. All groups report any perceived irregularities to the Citizen's Advocacy Office (CAO) for follow-on action. In addition, ACAC will sponsor monthly forums on corruption topics whereby civil society makes its concern known to the public.

administration. Work with pilot local governments to make procurement and tax/fee collection transparent will continue.

The CAO, formed in November 2001 and now handling 700 cases of alleged corruption, will expand its scope and staff to review cases of alleged trafficking, to include legal and social support to victims and potential victims of human trafficking. A special session on corruption and trafficking will be conducted at a regional meeting of anti-corruption partnerships from the Europe and Eurasia region to be held in Albania in Spring 2002 to forge cross-border linkages in the battle. A special session on corruption and trafficking will be conducted at an international meeting of Citizen Advocacy Offices to be held in Albania in Spring 2003, again to forge cross-border linkages. Small grants to combat corruption and trafficking will be awarded to relevant Albanian NGOs. This program ends with FY 2003. Evaluation will be carried out, new program designed and competition decisions made and carried out. Contractors/grantees include: Management Systems International (MSI) (prime), Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) and Institute for Development Alternatives and Research (IDRA) (sub).

FY 2004 Program:

Judicial institution building (\$1,030,000 AEEB). The bulk of the assistance will move to the district courts which are the primary interface between the citizenry and the judiciary. Five pilot courts spanning the country will receive ongoing assistance in the administration of justice to make the courts more efficient and user friendly. Ongoing professional training for sitting judges will continue. The curriculum of the School of Magistrates will be broadened and strengthened to improve the quality of the new intake of judges. Efforts will continue to make sitting judges accountable for their actions.

Anti-corruption (\$1,250,000 AEEB). Support to the ACAC and CAO will continue, whereby the first brings civil society pressure on government for reform and the other investigates alleged corruption/trafficking cases to determine appropriate action such as: closure, referral to appropriate government body, or direct legal action. Support to NGOs to combat corruption/trafficking will continue. Regional linkages on anti-corruption and anti-trafficking will be strengthened, as both are regional issues.

Performance and Results: The rule of law in Albania is severely hampered by inefficiency, incompetence, and corruption. USAID's ROL program works toward gradual improvement in efficiency and competence and a reduction in corruption/trafficking and is attaining such. Most courts are computerized and have access to the Internet. Three classes graduated from the School of Magistrates, which brings newly trained prosecutors and judges into the system. Ongoing professional training for sitting judges continues to improve their abilities. The challenge at this point lies in making the judiciary accountable for its actions. USAID's program is aimed at addressing this challenge over time and at a pace which the Albanian court system can absorb.

The election of two judges from the National Judicial Conference to the High Council of Justices illustrates gradual improvement. Fifteen candidates placed nominations before the nominating committee, 13 were acceptable, all 13 lobbied their peers, free and transparent elections were held, and two winners were appointed to the High Council. In the past, the Chief Justice arbitrarily appointed members to the High Council. USAID was instrumental in establishing the nominating committee and shepherding this first exercise of its powers.

The reactions of the average citizen and the political elite to the anti-corruption efforts are stunning. Within 10 months of formation, the CAO received 700 cases, forcing a tripling of staff and a move to larger offices. The General Prosecutor agreed to pursue all cases forwarded to his office by the CAO. The weekly TV program on corruption sponsored by ACAC enjoys the highest viewership in its time slot. The introduction of an anti-corruption week saw President Moisiu and Leader of the Opposition MP Berisha join ACAC as private citizens. Politicians are increasingly aware that corruption is no longer an issue they can ignore.

US Financing in Thousands of Dollars

Albania

182-0220 Rule of Law	AEEB	ESF
Through September 30, 2001		
Obligations	2,435	250
Expenditures	672	0
Unliquidated	1,763	250
Fiscal Year 2002		
Obligations	1,279	0
Expenditures	1,180	130
Through September 30, 2002		
Obligations	3,714	250
Expenditures	1,852	130
Unliquidated	1,862	120
Prior Year Unobligated Funds		
Obligations	1,200	0
Planned Fiscal Year 2003 NOA		
Obligations	2,280	0
Total Planned Fiscal Year 2003		
Obligations	3,480	0
Proposed Fiscal Year 2004 NOA		
Obligations	2,280	0
Future Obligations	0	0
Est. Total Cost	9,474	250